

**let's not make it
harder (than it
has to be)**

cathect

let's not make it harder (than it has to be) by cathect

Category: IT (2017)

Genre: First Date, Fluffy, Hand Jobs, M/M, Modern AU, bill and richie mess around in bill's truck, the boys are all aged up

Language: English

Relationships: Bill Denbrough/Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Bill Denbrough/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-10-26

Updated: 2017-10-26

Packaged: 2020-01-29 14:07:16

Rating: Explicit

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 5,197

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

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“This is really important to you, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, it is.” Eddie’s voice is steady and sure. Richie ventures to guess that he’s been thinking it over for a while. “It really, really is.”

“Okay.” Richie says, even though he’s already agreed to do it. Eddie relaxes significantly in his arms. “Okay, Eddie.” He pushes his nose affectionately to the smaller boy’s forehead.

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or the one where eddie, bill, and richie have been dating for almost a year and eddie really wants bill and richie to go on a date.

let's not make it harder (than it has to be)

Author's Note:

a few notes about this fic:

- this is a modern au
- in this "universe," eddie and richie don't meet bill until after high school
- none of the events of "it" have happened
- eddie, richie, and bill are in a poly relationship in which the three of them have decided to date each other "equally" (i recognize that not all poly relationships follow this pattern)
- all three of them are over the age of eighteen!

disclaimer: i have never personally been in a poly relationship, so the way i write this one is just from my own research and understanding of how they work. i don't pretend to be an expert in the matter.

special thank you to erin for all her help writing The Truck Scene and for being the best editor/cheerleader around! an additional thank you to sarah and han for always being 110% willing to read my fics.

It takes three months of living together for Richie and Bill to realize they've never been on a date.

Well, technically it's Eddie that brings it up. Bill and Richie are sitting on the bed while the third member of their triad folds his clothes with more focus than they've ever seen him do anything.

He's packing a couple of bags for his trip back to Derry in the morning— as it turns out, Mrs. Kasprak hadn't been all that thrilled when Richie whisked her son off to Texas after they graduated. She'd allowed him to go, only under the condition that he come back and visit. Often. For long periods of time.

"It's only three weeks." Eddie says, more to himself than to Bill and

Richie. He doesn't sound like he's convinced himself that it's not too long. He pauses in the middle of smoothing out a pair of jeans, looking over at them. "You guys are going to be okay, right?"

This is the first time that Bill and Richie will have the house to themselves since Bill moved in. And, while they enjoy each other's company, they've yet to really bond over anything that isn't Eddie. Neither of them brings this point up, for fear of stressing Eddie out more than he already is.

"Of course." Bill says with a smile. Richie nods.

"Yeah, Eds," he says. "I mean, we're already dating, right? Hanging out for a few weeks should be a breeze at this point." Bill snorts next to him.

"Actually, there's something I wanted to talk to you guys about." Eddie says, chewing on his lip thoughtfully for a moment. "I want you to go on a date while I'm gone." For a moment, Richie thinks he's joking, but Eddie's expression doesn't change.

"We've been on dates before." He says.

"Yeah." Bill chimes in.

"The *three* of us have been on dates before." Eddie corrects them, returning to his folding in an effort to give his hands something to do. "Never just the two of you, though."

"Isn't that the point of the whole *poly* thing?" Richie asks. Eddie sighs deep in his chest, setting his work down for good this time as he turns to face them fully.

"Exactly." He says. "This isn't supposed to be *Eddie and His Boyfriends*. That's not what we agreed on when we started this. The *three* of us were supposed to date *each other*."

Richie looks over at Bill. He seems equally as confused and concerned by Eddie's words as Richie does. Richie wonders, briefly, how long this has been on his mind. Eddie sighs again.

"Listen, I know it's an odd thing to ask but—" He cuts himself off,

clearing his throat to relax his voice. “If it doesn’t work, it doesn’t work, and we can figure it out when I get back. But I want you guys to try this.”

Bill and Richie share a glance. It’s impossible for either of them to deny anything Eddie really wants and they both know it. Bill is the first to say something.

“Yeah.” He concedes. “O-okay.” Richie nods along in agreement.

“Okay, Eddie.” Richie says. Together, they get up and move closer to him. “Whatever you want.”

“Guys.” Eddie warns as Richie slips his arms around his waist, tugging him back from the bed just enough to give Bill room to stand in front of them.

Richie leans down, kissing one of Eddie’s shoulders as his fingers slide under the material of the smaller boy’s shirt and up his stomach.

“Hmm?” He asks as Bill steps forward and ducks his head a little to press his own mouth into Eddie’s neck.

“Guys, come on.” Eddie whines. “I just took a shower and this— fuck, this is so unfair.”

“You c-c-can shower again.” Bill reminds him softly, sharing a knowing look with Richie over Eddie’s shoulder. They may not know each other perfectly, but they know Eddie.

“I hate both of you.” Eddie mutters as he relaxes into Richie’s hold.

“Yeah, yeah.” Richie responds. “Sure you do.”

“Okay, ground rules.” Richie says a while later, when they’ve finally let Eddie out of bed.

“For what?” Eddie asks. He hasn’t bothered showering yet and his hair is thoroughly disheveled. Richie can’t imagine his looks any different— Eddie has a tendency to use Richie’s curls as a sort of

anchor during sex.

“I assume he m-means for our date.” Bill says, stretching his arms over his head. He pauses as he catches his reflection in the mirror over the chest of drawers on the opposite side of the room. Clambering out of the bed, he makes his way closer and turns so he can get a better look at his shoulder. “God dammit, Richie.”

“Hmm?” Richie asks, looking up at Bill. He just barely stifles a laugh when he notices the five bright red lines on Bill’s arm. He vaguely remembers dragging his nails across the other boy’s skin, but shrugs nonchalantly. “How do you know it was me?”

“I’m not even going to entertain th-that question with a response.” Bill answers with a glare. Then, shaking his head, he turns back to Eddie. “But back to the ground rules.”

“There aren’t any ground rules.” Eddie says like he’s had the answer ready, just waiting for one of them to ask again. Richie furrows his eyebrows.

“What do you mean, there aren’t any?” He asks. Bill seems to share a similar skepticism.

“I mean that there aren’t any.” Eddie sounds marginally more annoyed now. “The whole point of this is for you two to spend some time focusing on your part of this relationship.” Richie feels like he still doesn’t completely understand.

“I don’t—”

“It means exactly what it sounds like it means.” Eddie cuts Bill off, dropping the checklist he’d been studying onto the bed. “My only requirement is one date. Other than that, if you don’t want to speak to each other, that’s fine. If you want to—” He gestures between them and the bed with his hand like it’s sign language for *fuck each other’s brains out*, “that’s fine too.”

Before either of them has the chance to respond, the doorbell rings.

“I g-got it.” Bill says, already halfway through exiting the room. In his absence, Richie makes his way over to Eddie, pulling him into his

arms.

"This is really important to you, isn't it?"

"Yeah, it is." Eddie's voice is steady and sure. Richie ventures to guess that he's been thinking it over for a while. "It really, really is."

"Okay." Richie says, even though he's already agreed to do it. Eddie relaxes significantly in his arms. "Okay, Eddie." He pushes his nose affectionately to the smaller boy's forehead.

"Car's h-here, Eddie." Bill says, coming back into the room. Eddie nods, pulling back from Richie's embrace far enough to lean up and press a kiss to his waiting mouth.

Richie lets go of him then, and Eddie grabs his bags, heading for the door. Bill ducks his head to accept his own kiss from Eddie before taking one suitcase— then both, after a brief moment of protest from Eddie— from him and following him out.

Always so fucking chivalrous.

Richie wishes he didn't find it so damn attractive.

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It takes two weeks for Bill and Richie to make good on their promise.

It isn't purposeful— not entirely, anyway. They're both busy with work (Richie) and school (Bill), and when they do have some free time, they spend it in their respective rooms, trying to decompress. Every once in awhile, they'll end up in the living room at the same time and watch TV together.

A couple of times, Richie wakes up to Bill climbing into bed next to him, muttering something about *this damn relationship makes it impossible for me to s-sl-sleep alone anymore*. Richie doesn't mind, especially because Bill lets him be the big spoon. It's comforting for him to have someone in his arms in Eddie's absence.

“Eddie just texted me.” Bill says one day when they’re eating breakfast. “He w-wants to know why we haven’t gone out yet.” Richie freezes with a spoonful of Reese’s Puffs halfway to his mouth.

“How does he know we haven’t?” He asks, earning a small smile from Bill. “What?”

“He said you would have either called to complain or thank him by now.” They make the same amused sound simultaneously, make eye contact, and then laugh.

“I guess that’s fair.” Richie says around a bite. “Tell him we’ll get to it.”

“How about tomorrow night?” Bill suggests. “You h-have the day off don’t you?”

“Mm.” Richie says. “I was going to order pizza and do a porn marathon.” Bill rolls his eyes.

“Well, n-not anymore,” he says. “I’ll swing by the apartment and pick you up after class, okay?” Richie pretends to consider before he nods.

“Sure, Big Bill.” Richie stands and takes his bowl to the kitchen, dropping it into the sink. “Sounds good.”

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Bill won’t tell Richie where they’re going and it’s stressing him the fuck out.

“Seriously, Bill?” He asks. “Not even a hint?”

Bill shakes his head as he shifts onto the highway, his truck practically groaning at the simple task. It’s a yellow and white 1979 Chevrolet C/K, and Richie can’t stand it. The thing is held together by 25% duct tape and 75% pure, unadulterated hope, and is always one wrong move away from breaking down.

Richie had tried to convince Bill to take his Jeep, the much newer

and safer option. But Bill had insisted that since he was the one taking Richie out, it only made sense for him to drive his own car to do it.

Richie is really starting to regret all of his life decisions, including this relationship.

Fucking Eddie. Everything that changes Richie's life is always his idea.

Richie and Eddie had been dating first, for about two years, when they met Bill Denbrough at Stan's engagement party. Richie would have given Eddie the fucking moon if he asked for it so when Eddie set his sights on Bill, it's not like Richie could say *no*.

But Bill was a good decision: tall and handsome, and just the right combination of spontaneous and *way too mature for his age*. He has a certain element of control that grounds them all, and Richie can't quite decide how he feels about it.

"Okay, we're close enough that you h-have to close your eyes now." Bill says. Richie glances over at him, then out the window to see if he can tell where they are, then back to Bill.

"I don't recall agreeing to that."

"Just do it, Richie." Bill says, even as Richie is already raising his hands to push his glasses out of the way and cover his eyes.

"I swear to god, Bill, if all of this has just been a ploy to murder me —"

"*Richie.*" Bill is laughing as he says it.

They only drive for another five minutes or so before Richie feels Bill pull into a parking spot. Richie opens his mouth to speak when he hears the sudden, unmistakable sound of children's laughter outside. A lot of it.

"Where the hell are we, Bill?" Richie turns to face Bill despite the fact that he's still covering his eyes with his hands.

“Why don’t you s-see for yourself?” Bill asks, fingers wrapping gently around Richie’s wrists and pulling his hands from his face. Richie gets the brief sight of Bill smiling next to him before he looks out the windshield and practically chokes on nothing.

“Bill.” He says, blinking a few times to make sure he’s seeing correctly. “Did you really bring me to a fucking Chuck E. Cheese’s?” Bill bursts out laughing next to him.

“Yeah, I really did.” He says, still holding Richie’s wrists. He gives them a small squeeze before letting go and turning off the car. “Come on. L-let’s go inside.”

“Are they even going to let us in?” Richie asks, but he’s following Bill’s lead and climbing out of the truck. “We’re not exactly kids.”

“We’re paying customers.” Bill reminds him. “O-of course they’ll let us in.”

Richie’s still a little skeptical, and it must show on his face because a second later Bill is throwing an arm around his shoulders.

“Besides, they serve beer.” He says directly into Richie’s ear. Richie nods, a smile tugging at his mouth.

“Okay, fine.” He surrenders. “Let’s do it.”

As it turns out, the beer tastes like shit and the whole place smells like a daycare.

Richie doesn’t mind though. Not when Bill is trying to kick a half-drunk Richie’s ass at skee ball and failing miserably. Bill, of course, has decided to limit himself to one beer so he can drive them home safely. Said beer has been mostly abandoned due to the atrocious taste.

“You might actually be the worst skee ball player of all time, Big Bill.” Richie comments as Bill launches another ball and it just barely makes it into the ring worth ten points.

“I am not.” Bill says, throwing the next one with double the force and then groaning when it bounces off the top ring and comes rolling back down the ramp. Richie leans down and catches it before it can hit the ground and, with a simple flick of his wrist, sinks it into the 50-point ring. Bill watches with a scowl. “How in the f-fuck do you even do that?”

“What can I say? I’m good with my hands.” Richie winks and, even though the joke is one of his worst, a blush works its way up Bill’s neck. He silently prides himself on earning the reaction.

“Show me.” Bill says, voice a little rough and hoarse in the back of his throat.

Richie blinks in surprise, his own face going warm—he decides to pretend it’s the beer catching up with him. Bill clears his throat, realizing what he’s said.

“How to p-play better, I mean.” He clarifies, gesturing to the skee ball machine. Richie forces out a nervous laugh and nods.

“It’s all in the wrist.” He starts, putting on his best coach voice. “If your follow-through doesn’t end with your wrist at the right angle, it’s never going to work.”

“And what angle is that?” Bill asks. Richie raises his own arm to demonstrate, but realizes that Bill is holding out his hand. A not-very-subtle invitation.

Oh, you absolute fucking flirt.

Richie reaches out and takes Bill’s hand in both of his own, bending his wrist gently.

“Like this.” He says, looking up. But Bill isn’t looking at their hands and, a moment later, he’s leaning down and pressing his mouth against Richie’s.

The kiss is short, a simple touch of closed lips, but it sends Richie’s heart racing. Bill pulls away smiling, clearly satisfied with himself. The whole thing feels like a scene from a teenage rom-com, and it reminds Richie of his first kiss with Eddie.

“Thanks.” Bill says, somehow managing to sound completely casual as he straightens himself back up. “Let me t-try again.”

Richie swallows as Bill turns back to the machine and bends down to insert a coin, starting a new game. It lights up and Bill rolls a few balls up the ramp back-to-back. He does better than before— 50, 100, then another 50 points— and turns around with a grin on his face.

A grin that has Richie’s head spinning.

“Maybe I’ll beat you after all.” Bill says and that manages to snap Richie out of his daze.

“Woah, woah, Bill,” he says, starting his own new game on the next machine over. “Let’s not get ahead of ourselves.”

It’s still early by the time they leave.

The place closes at 9:00, but it takes a good thirty or so minutes for the employees to clear the place of all the stragglers. Bill and Richie are two of the last to leave.

It’s cold when they get outside. Cold enough that Bill takes off his jacket and drapes it around Richie’s shoulders without a single word.

“Wow.” Richie says. “Really going for the most cliche first date possible, aren’t we?” Bill rolls his eyes and bumps Richie’s shoulder with his own.

“I’m j-just trying to be n-nice.” The tips of his ears are pink and Richie can’t tell if it’s from the cold or not. “Dick.” With the amount of affection in his voice, it sounds synonymous for *babe*.

Without thinking, Richie reaches over and grabs onto Bill’s hand.

“Thanks.” He says. Bill glances at him like he’s waiting for a Richie Punchline™ to follow, but Richie just squeezes his fingers gently.

“You’re w-welcome.” Bill says, squeezing back.

They walk to the car slowly, taking their time. They parked pretty far back in the lot, and they weave in and out of half-full rows of cars, never disconnecting from each other. Finding Bill's atrociously yellow truck is easy and a few minutes later, they're on their way home.

Bill spends the first few minutes of the drive with his eyes hyperfocused on the road—they're in a part of town that requires a lot of odd turns onto roads that aren't marked very well. It's a recipe for disaster but Bill has driven it enough times that he gets them through it with ease. When they're finally on a back road, Bill takes his right hand off the wheel and blindly searches for Richie's on the bench seat between them. Richie meets him halfway, twining their fingers together.

"I had a really good time, Bill." Richie says after a bit of silence.

"You sound surprised." Bill observes. He presses his palm into the steering wheel as he makes an easy turn. Richie shrugs.

"I mean, obviously I knew you were a fun guy but—" He shrugs again when he notices Bill is looking over at him quizzically. "I don't know."

"What do you n-not know?" Bill pushes. Richie sighs.

"Sometimes I kind of feel like Eddie is right." Richie says, glancing down at his lap. "That our relationship is sort of like *hey nice to meet you, this is my boyfriend Eddie... and his boyfriend Bill.*" Bill snorts beside him and Richie smiles a little at the sound. "You know what I mean?"

"Yeah, I know what you mean." Bill says with a nod of his head. "I th-think sometimes I really do forget that we're all in this relationship together."

"Mm." Richie agrees, leaning against the door. "I'm starting to realize it shouldn't just be about what Eddie wants. It should be about what we want, too."

"Yeah."

They fall into silence again as Richie realizes that what he wants

right now is sitting in the seat next to him.

“Pull over.” Richie says, turning his body to face Bill.

“What?” Bill asks, then seems to process the tone in Richie’s voice. “Richie, I— you d-don’t want to w-wait until we g-get back?” He says, stutter acting up in an unbearably adorable way. Even as he says it, he’s looking out onto the dark road like he’s searching for a place to stop.

“Bill, pull the fucking truck over.”

Bill does as he’s told, flipping on his turn signal and pulling off to the side of the road, letting go of Richie’s hand to unbuckle his seatbelt as he does. He barely gets the truck in park before Richie is grabbing a handful of his shirt and pulling him across the bench seating—the only thing this goddamn truck is good for, apparently.

Bill’s mouth is desperate against Richie’s as he backs him into the car door. He fumbles up onto the bench, knocking his ankle against the steering wheel. They both jump a little at the sound, breaking away just so Bill can make sure he hasn’t done the hunk of metal any damage. A moment later, Bill is finding Richie’s lips again and licking into his waiting mouth.

They’ve always been explosive, like two unstoppable forces of nature and, without Eddie to soften the whole thing, it’s more obvious in the way everything feels a little too sharp. A little too jagged. And it’s not unpleasant to be kissing like you’re trying to win a war, but Richie almost feels a sense of relief in surrendering control to Bill.

Bill takes it in stride, large hands grabbing onto Richie’s face and tilting his head to the exact angle he wants. Richie’s own hands rest weakly on Bill’s arms as he struggles to keep up with his dizzying pace. He feels completely out of breath and out of control.

He fucking *loves* it.

One of Bill’s hands works its way into Richie’s curls, tugging his head back just enough that, when he pulls away, the entirety of Richie’s throat is exposed to him. He pushes forward to attach his mouth to

Richie's skin and Richie manages to choke on his own breath at the feeling of Bill half-hard against his leg.

"Jesus, Bill." Richie says, unable to pass up the opportunity to make a snarky comment. Bill exhales roughly against him.

"For once in your f-fucking life, Tozier—" He bites down on Richie's neck, hard. "Shut your mouth."

Richie is raising his head to retaliate (by just talking *more*) when Bill's hand worms its way between their bodies, into Richie's jeans and around his dick. His palm is slick, and Richie is a little offended that he hadn't even noticed Bill licking it as a half-assed substitute for lube. Not that he's complaining, because Bill's got this grip on him that's just *perfect*.

"Fuck!" Richie tosses his head back, hitting it against the window. Bill sits back a little and reaches out with his free hand to touch Richie's face gently.

"Y-you okay?"

"I'm fine. I'm good." Richie says, pupils blown as he nods his head along with his words. "Fuck— I'm good." Bill smiles before he leans forward and licks across his pulse point, pulling a groan from Richie's throat.

They're no strangers to this; Bill's gotten Richie off with his hands before, but this is different. This time, it isn't an afterthought while they're with Eddie. Eddie isn't there watching them with bated breath; Eddie's hands aren't helping, aren't finding purchase on their skin. It's just Bill and Richie. And this time, all of Bill's attention is on *him*.

It's almost too much for him.

Richie can't tell if the humming under his skin is from the alcohol or just from Bill's touch. As much as he wants to blame the former, he knows it's the latter. With every twist of Bill's wrist, Richie's hips keen forward again and again. Every brush of Bill's skin over his cock has Richie barreling closer and closer to orgasm— embarrassingly so.

“You’re being s-suspiciously quiet.” Bill mutters in his ear. It breaks Richie from his thoughts and pushes him back into reality. He chokes out a laugh.

“You told me to shut up,” Richie retorts. Bill huffs, and it seems almost apologetic. “Besides, it’s a little hard to come up with something clever to say when a hot guy is jacking you off.” He says, voice surprisingly steady under the circumstances. Bill smirks against his skin as Richie’s hips stutter forward again. “God, Bill. You’re going to drive me fucking insane.”

Bill doesn’t answer, choosing instead to focus on the task (literally) at hand. He strokes Richie off like it’s his fucking job and, between the alcohol buzzing in his veins and the heat of Bill’s body pressed into his, Richie doesn’t stand a goddamn chance. He’s feeling a thousand different things at once, and doesn’t even have a name for most of them.

It’s all of two minutes more before Richie gives a pitiful attempt at crying out Bill’s name as he comes. He can vaguely hear Bill whispering encouraging words in his ear, but it’s mostly drowned out by the sound of his own heart thundering away against his ribs. Bill keeps talking and keeps touching him until Richie feels like he might burst from the stimulation. When it finally starts to overwhelm him, he bats Bill’s hand away and rests his head against the door.

“G-god, you’re pretty when you come, you know that?” Bill says after a minute. “I always w-wanted to tell you that.” Richie grins, eyes still half-lidded and a little starry.

“It’s a gift.”

Richie jumps when he feels hands on his hips, pulling him forward. Sometime in the afterglow, Bill has adjusted himself so that he’s sitting up normally in the seat, and now he’s yanking Richie into his lap.

“Can’t believe it was s-so easy to get into your pants on the f-first date.” Bill says with a chuckle. His gaze slips up and down Richie’s body hungrily, and Richie melts a little under the stare. As he uses his hands on Bill’s shoulders to steady himself, Richie manages to

throw him a glare.

“Oh, fuck you.”

“Maybe.” Bill smirks, pressing a kiss to Richie’s jaw. “W-we’ll see how the night plays out.”

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Coming home a day early might be the best decision Eddie’s ever made.

Just stepping out of the Uber and onto the sidewalk outside his apartment complex lifts the immense weight from his shoulders put there by visiting his mother. Even climbing three flights of stairs with the straps of his suitcases digging into his fingers can’t bring down his mood.

He never heard from Richie or Bill about the date, other than that it happened. Unsure of what that means for the three of them, he’d decided to just wait until he got back to bring it up.

The whole thing has made him a little uneasy. He wonders if he’d pushed it too hard, if maybe they just weren’t ready for something like that. The three of them have been dating for close to a year now, but even that’s a short period of time for such a big change.

Eddie’s already planning out his apology in his head as he climbs the stairs. He’s sweating, and not just because of the afternoon sun on the back of his neck. He’s nervously readying himself to have a conversation that might put a damper on the whole relationship, and he’s going to be uncomfortably soaked and sticky while he does it. By the time he reaches the door and has the key in the lock, he feels mostly ready to face his boyfriends.

What he’s *not* ready for is what he hears when he comes into the apartment.

The first thing he notices is that there’s a shirt on the back of the couch. He silently curses Richie— even after all their time being together, Richie hasn’t learned that Eddie is *seriously tired of picking*

up after him. Rolling his eyes, he sets down his bags and picks up the black tee, heading down to the laundry room.

There's music coming from Richie's room at the end of the hall, spilling out through the crack at the bottom of the door. Eddie is just tilting his head to try and figure out what the song is when a crash comes from inside the room, followed by Richie exclaiming, "Fuck!"

Eddie jumps, speeding up his pace and bypassing the laundry room in favor of Richie's. He's just about to grab onto the handle when he hears Bill's voice respond.

"Idiot." He doesn't sound particularly angry, but Eddie still pauses, wondering if they're in the middle of an argument. Did he do that? Has he totally fucked this up?

He pushes open the door just in time to see Richie accepting Bill's tongue into his mouth.

For a moment, he just stands there totally stunned. Richie is sitting on the dresser and Bill is standing between his legs, pushing Richie's back against the wall. Richie's shirt is off— explaining why it's in Eddie's hand— and Bill's is unbuttoned and halfway off his shoulders.

Eddie tries to think of something to say. Something clever, witty. Seductive, maybe.

"Umm." Is what he says instead.

"Eddie— jesus." Richie says when Bill lets him go in surprise. Bill takes a couple of steps back, clearing his throat awkwardly and dragging a hand across his mouth like it'll hide how kiss-bruised they are. Richie doesn't bother trying to do the same; he sits there with his chest littered in hickies and his lips as flushed as Bill's.

"You're h-home early." Bill says.

Eddie looks between them, then at the lamp on the ground. It's not broken, but it was clearly knocked off the dresser in the process of getting Richie up there. Eddie can't figure out why they're acting like he just caught them doing something wrong. Maybe it's just the newness of it all.

“Well, that explains the crash,” he comments, glancing up at the other boys again. “So, the date went well, then?” Eddie’s words seem to break the air around them into something more comfortable and both Richie and Bill laugh.

“I’d say so.” Bill says, sharing a grin with Richie. Eddie snorts as Richie hops back down onto the ground and shrugs.

“It was alright, I guess.” He says, earning a smack on the arm from Bill.

“Good.” Eddie smiles broadly at both of them. “I’m glad.”

His heart actually swells at the way they look at each other next. It’s the way he’s always looked at both of them: warm and happy and a good amount of *just a little bit in love*. He’d always known it was only a matter of time before they saw in each other what he sees in them. To think he’d been worried; he has the *best* ideas.

“There’s something so ridiculously satisfying about being the cause of this.” Eddie says, nodding in their direction as he passes by to take a seat on the edge of Richie’s bed.

“Yeah?” Bill asks. “I b-bet we could satisfy you better.”

Both Richie and Eddie practically break their necks looking over at him in surprise. Richie looks a little proud as he absently adjusts his glasses on his face. Eddie scrunches his nose.

“Maybe I shouldn’t have left you alone with him.” He says. Richie throws him a look.

“I don’t know, Eds.” He takes a few steps closer, kneeling at Eddie’s feet and pushing his knees apart so he can occupy the space between them. “I think Big Bill might be making a really good point.”

“It’s a g-gift.” Bill says and Richie chuckles. A look passes between them and Eddie wonders what he’s missed. The bed dips under Bill’s weight as he sits down at Eddie’s side.

They’re both looking at him with wide, expectant eyes. Richie is tugging at one of Eddie’s sleeves, pouting just a little bit— it’s likely

unintentional. Bill's hand is creeping toward the hem of Eddie's shirt, and he's smirking— it's entirely intentional. Idiots.

My idiots.

"What are you waiting for? Permission?" Eddie croaks out. And that's all it takes; the next moment finds him practically drowning in the other two boys.

He hopes no one ever pulls him to the surface again.

Author's Note:

as always, thank you for reading!

be sure to drop a comment letting me know what you thought!